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GENERAL STATUS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

1. Probably one of the foremost reasons in the USSR for people wanting to become doctors, other than their natural interest in medicine, is the amount of individual freedom they are afforded in comparison with the general working class. Like other professional classes in the USSR, including professors, chemists, engineers, etc, doctors do not have to deal with the Communist party committees on matters such as production quotas or work loads. The atmosphere in medicine is free, to a great extent, from government interference. Another large group that enters medicine in the USSR are women. Soviet medical schools where 60% of the students were women. Medical schools in the USSR also permit qualified individuals to enter medical training up to 40 yrs of age. This factor alone permits many to enter medical schools who have, for some reason or another when they were young, deferred their entrance into medicine. Prior to 1941, there were certain classes of people in the USSR who were excluded from the medical profession. They included children of Kulaks, priests or others in religious orders. Also excluded were children of political prisoners or those considered unreliable because of family background.

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COMPARATIVE STATUS OF MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PHYSICIANS

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2. While doctors as a group have many more privileges than the working classes, there are only slight variations in privileges between people in civil
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medicine and those in military medicine. [redacted] doctor in the military service receives only the privileges that other army officers of his rank receive. There are no particular privileges that attract civil doctors into military medicine. A doctor in military service spends more time on duty than one in civil medicine. For example, the actual work load of a doctor in civil medicine is six hours per day, six days a week. In addition, of course, he has his evening rounds at the hospital and is on call 24 hours, and off 24 hrs. Professors, and heads of departments of medical schools have a more flexible schedule; many of them are consultants in their fields to several civilian and military hospitals.

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STATUS OF DENTISTRY

3. [redacted] the professional status of people engaged in dentistry compared with those in the medical profession is about the same. A dentist actually takes the same course in a medical school that a doctor does, but has specialized in oral surgery. The course of training in both professions is five years. Before 1935, medical schools were divided into a Prophylactic and Sanitary division and a Stomatologic division. The former for medical training and the latter for dental training. There were special medical stomatologic institutes located at Leningrad, Kiev, one in Siberia [redacted]

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[redacted] Since 1941, the stomatologic institutes have been eliminated and in their place a stomatologic department has been organized in each medical school. Dentists and doctors are paid the same wages (250 rubles per month in 1941), belong to the same union - Medical Sanitary Labor Union - and generally enjoy the same social status. There are, however, dental technicians who are permitted to treat and pull teeth. They are not to be confused with dental surgeons or people who have graduated with training in stomatologic procedures. The so-called dental technician has only three years of professional training. He is not permitted to perform oral surgery.

IRRITATIONS OF SOVIET MEDICAL SYSTEM

4. [redacted] the biggest complaint of doctors in the USSR is the tremendous amount of bureaucracy imposed upon them by the Ministry of Health in Moscow. They have to receive permission for practically everything from the Ministry. The doctors would welcome a right to have their own private practice, private hospitals, research organizations and, most of all, a return to popular medicine. They would also like to have the authority to appoint the head of a hospital rather than have him appointed, as is now the case. Doctors in the USSR are no different than those in the US as regards limits in the supply of facilities to their patients. They do not become philosophic about it, but attempt to secure the needed drugs and medicines. Even during the German occupation of Vinnitsa during World War II, Soviet doctors under German rule insisted upon adequate drugs and medicines for their patients, even though they did not always receive sufficient quantities. They lose their tempers and become angry over shortages just like any other nationality group.

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POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL

5. Doctors in the USSR are continually exposed to political indoctrination in the ideologies of Communism. In each medical school, or, where there is no medical school available, in each hospital, a Marxist-Lenin department is organized which is responsible for continuous political indoctrination of each doctor. [redacted] the Marxist-Lenin departments were organized in 1937 and have proven very effective. Each doctor is required to attend lectures, of one hour duration, twice a week, and at the end of each lecture a test is given. The doctor is required to repeat the lecture if he fails the test. A completion certificate is given at the end of the course. Material for all the political courses is received in the form of prepared lectures from the Academy of Sciences at Moscow. In Krasnodar, the four large medical schools had political indoctrination departments.

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MILITARY INDOCTRINATION OF CIVILIAN PHYSICIANS

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6. Doctors in civil medicine are also required to take a six months' course in the military sanitary department of each medical school. The course, which consists of one hour lectures, twice monthly, includes instruction in the following:

- (a) medical battalion organization
- (b) organized evacuation of the wounded
- (c) gas mask drill
- (d) tactics
- (e) map reading
- (f) military sanitation
- (g) military surgery
- (h) war diseases
- (i) mental diseases
- (j) history of Communist party and principles of Marxism and Leninism.

The individual responsible for giving the military medical training in each military district is the highest ranking military officer of that district. At the completion of each lecture, examinations are given to determine how much the individual has absorbed from the training. A failure in any examination is sufficient reason for a doctor to have to repeat the course.

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